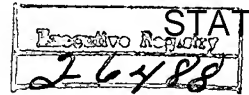
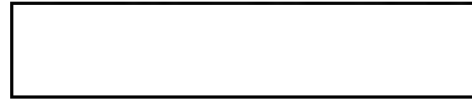


*Declassified
2000-05-15
JFK*



February 25, 1952

Lt. General Walter B. Smith
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear General Smith:

It was good to see you again on my first trip to Washington since last June.

Herewith my comments on the Princeton meeting:

1. The meeting was effectively organized and, I think, quite productive. The consultants are now brought in at just about the right stage in the development of an estimate - when the estimate has taken tangible form but before the crucial intelligence conclusions have been reached.

2. I was much impressed by in his role as Far Eastern specialist. I had not seen him since OSS days. He really knows the area. He is not hopelessly confused about Communists as "simple agrarian reformers" or the other nonsense which men like Lattimore spout.

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3. In the series of questions and suggestions advanced in connection with a suggested revision of the estimate dealing with the Russian situation, I noted a general tendency with which I am in sharp disagreement:

A. There was an implication that the Communists in Korea had demonstrated that they were desirous of a truce and that we could assume that an armistice would in fact be made. I think this contrary to fact. It seems to me that the present situation in Korea is very advantageous to the Russians and Chinese and that they will not agree to an armistice unless upon terms most unfavorable to us. There is almost no pressure upon the Russians and Chinese in the present situation to induce them to agree to an armistice.

B. There was an implication in the paper that our military position had greatly improved during the last six months or a year

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Revised

Lt. General Walter B. Smith

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February 25, 1952

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vis-a-vis the Russians. The only aspect in which this is true is with respect to the organization of our ground forces, and our better defensive position in Korea. It most emphatically is not so with respect to air power and all its far-reaching tactical and strategic consequences. On the contrary, the situation with respect to the balance of power in the air has gravely changed for the worse. What this means with respect to the vulnerability of Russia to atomic attack is obvious.

Our situation in Europe with respect to ground forces is indeed better, largely due to our having four more divisions there.


The situation in the Near East and in Southeast Asia is, of course, much worse.

All this does not mean that the danger of general war is necessarily now more acute than before. It does mean that optimistic assumptions that developments have made the element of relative military power less important than seemed true a year ago are thoroughly unwarranted. It is, indeed, when the Kremlin is stopped in its possibilities for advance, that the greatest danger of the Kremlin taking maximum risks of general war arises. If we are in a military position to defeat the Communists at sometime in the future when all their possibilities for expansion have been sealed off and if we maintain this position of strength we will have won the cold war.

Until we have such strength we are confronted by the dilemma that we will lose the cold war if we allow the Soviets to expand, while we face the possibility of general war if we effectively stop Soviet expansion. If we do not have the will to face this latter alternative we should have thrown in our hand to begin with, for in that case we never had a chance to win either a hot or a cold war.


When you make that trip to Florida I hope you will drive through Durham and will not fail to stop off and see us.

Sincerely,



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CBH:pe

P.S. I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. .

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MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SMITH

I will pass the attached letter from

long to DD/I after you
have seen it.

JS
JS

*Noted
Amel*

27 February 1952
(DATE)

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